

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-54 are in the case.

The applicants have studied the office Action dated November 23, 2004, and believe the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 16-21, 23-29, 31-37, 39-41, 43-49, and 41-54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,119,377 to Cobb et al., (Cobb). Claims 3, 7, 22, 38 and 42 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb in view of the background section. Claims 15, 30 and 50 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,708,291 to Kidder. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

It is the Examiner's position that "Cobb (US 5,119,377) teaches all the limitations recited in independent claim 1." The applicants strongly disagree.

For example, it is the Examiner's position that the "architecture generic alert function" of the Cobb reference meets the recited "error handling agent." It is believed that the Examiner is referring to the "IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function" discussed in the Cobb reference. However, claim 1 recites that the error handling agent "accesses error information associated with the identifier and generates error information describing a specific cause of the error that caused the test operation to fail." It is clear that the Examiner's citations to the Cobb reference do not describe an IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function which "accesses error information associated with the identifier and generates error information describing a specific cause of the error that caused the test operation to fail." Instead, it appears from the Examiner's citations to the Cobb reference that the IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function is used to send an "automatic notification of the problem to an operator." Cobb, col. 3, lines 12 et seq.

It further appears to be the Examiner's position that the recited "access[ing of] error information associated with the identifier and generat[ion of] error information describing a specific cause of the error that caused the test operation to fail" is met by the description of the construction of a generic alert 70 (col. 8, lines 19-30) including an error log data record which

includes a software symptom string (col. 7, lines 1-65). However, it appears that the generic alert 70 of the Cobb reference is generated by the Early Detection Data Capture (EDDC) process rather than the IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function. Thus, the Examiner has cited no portion of the Cobb reference which teaches or suggests that the IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function "accesses error information associated with the identifier and generates error information describing a specific cause of the error that caused the test operation to fail."

In one embodiment as described in the present specification, the "identifier" comprises a unique serial number 14. In that embodiment:

"By using the unique serial number 14, minimal data is returned by the service function 8. The unique serial number 14 provides all the context information about the source of the error through a lookup of the unique serial number in the serial number directory 16. This minimizes the amount of data that must be transmitted over a network from the service function 8 to the error handling agent 16. ..." Present specification, page 7, line 24 et seq.

By comparison, it appears that a substantial amount of information is passed by the generic alert 70 to the IBM System Network Architecture generic alert function in the Cobb reference. It is appreciated of course that in a method in accordance with claim 1 of the present application, the amount of information passed with an identifier may vary, depending upon the particular application. Independent claims 5, 20, 36 and 40 may be distinguished in a similar fashion. Moreover, the dependent claims include additional limitations, which in combination with the base and intervening claims from which they depend provide still further grounds of patentability over the cited art.

The Examiner's citations to the Kidder reference do not obviate the deficiencies of the Examiner's citations to the Cobb reference. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 1-54 should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has made various comments concerning the anticipation or obviousness of certain features of the present inventions. Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants have

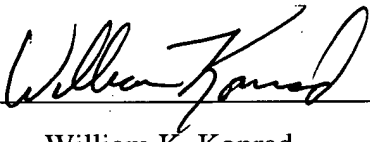
addressed those comments directly hereinabove or the Examiner's comments are deemed moot in view of the above response.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicant submits that the pending claims 1-54 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants have not added any claims. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 09-0449.

The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at (310) 553-7977 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

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